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No. 103.



THE RED MAZEPPA; OR, The Madman of the Plains.

A STRANGE STORY OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

Author of "Overland Kit," "Wolf Demon," "Ace of Spades," "Witches of New York," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEFIANCE UNTO DEATH.

A VAST prairie, covered with the greenest of grass and decked with thousands of wild flowers, redolent of perfume.

As far as the eye could reach the prairie extended. It was broken here and there by small clumps of timber fringed by circles of bushes.

The prairie was the "divide" that separated the waters of the Llano and Guadalupe on the north from the Nueces and Frio on the south.

In the center of the vast prairie stood a tall and stately white oak tree; a giant in stature when compared to the knotted trunks of the trees of which the "prairie islands" were formed.

The white oak stood solitary and alone; a very forest chieftain in its might.

Darkness still hovered over the prairie, but faint, gray lines afar off in the eastern skies heralded the coming of the day-god.

Slowly—little by little, the gray lines of light grew broader and broader. The night, like a spirit of evil, gathered up its dark mantle and stole silently away.

The birds woke, and from their coverts in the tall grass, and in the leafy limbs, welcomed the coming morn with gladsome notes.

As the light grew stronger and stronger it revealed a score of sleeping men stretched upon the prairie beneath the branches of the oak; a score of horses corralled together, and a mounted sentry, a hundred paces from the tree, who, motionless as a statue, kept ward and watch.

What manner of men are these who rest as snugly upon the broad bosom of the prairie and sleep as sweetly as a babe nestled on a young mother's breast?

A single glance and we guess the truth.

We are looking upon the warriors of the famous tribe of "horse" Indians, known far and wide, to friend and foe, as the great Comanche Nation. The proud savages who call themselves the "masters of the prairie," and well they deserve the vaunted title.

The daylight strengthens.

One by one the warriors waken. The scanty morning meal is partaken of, and then, with many an earnest glance southward, the warriors sit in groups beneath the spreading branches of the oak and wait.

One used to the men and manners of the Comanches would speedily have guessed that it was no common cause that had brought the warriors beneath the oak, for the party was composed of the greatest chieftains of the tribe.

Yon tall, dark chieftain was the wily Ah-hu-la, whose band pitch their lodges by the swift-flowing stream, known to the Spaniards as the Devil's river. The brawny and short-legged warrior by his side is the "Big Leaf," whose wigwam is overshadowed by the Painted Rock, and whose horses drink out of the yellow Rio Grande. The stern-visaged veteran who sits apart from the rest, is the mighty chief, known far and wide as the "Apache-slayer," and his band dwells where the Concho cuts its way through the mountain passes to the plain. And of all the chiefs who sit and wait so patiently, not one but has won a name for great and glorious deeds.

The Apache-slayer gazed afar off over

the prairie; his glance was the glance of the hawk.

"Wah!" he exclaimed, in deep tones, "let my brothers look!" and with outstretched finger he pointed to the south.

The warriors bent their eyes in the direction indicated by the chief.

On the line of the horizon was a little black speck; it grew larger and larger; the keen eyes of the Indians detected that it was a horse and rider.

Silent and motionless as statues the chieftains sat and waited for the stranger to approach.

It was evident that he was expected.

Larger and larger the black speck loomed up against the clear sky, until at last it stood revealed—a milk-white horse and an Indian rider.

We say an Indian, for the rider was dressed in the buck-skin garb dear to the heart of the wild sons of the wilderness, and wore eagle-plumes curiously twisted in his long raven locks, but his face was whiter far than the face of any one of the dusky warriors who waited for him beneath the shadows of the oak.

It was the famous Comanche chief, the White Mustang, who rode so rapidly over the prairie; the warrior, reputed to be the greatest fighting-man in all the land washed by the Rio Grande del Norte, from where the white sierras frowned upon the prairie to the yellow sands of the Mexican gulf.

The White Mustang dismounted from the milk-white steed—a barb of matchless beauty—and standing upon the prairie, faced his shadowed rider.

In person the chief was strangely unlike the rest of his nation. He was tall, sinewy and supple; all the savage grace of the panther, all the strength of the mountain king, the grizzly bear. Straight as a pine, elastic as the willow. His face, with its high cheek-bones and brilliant black eyes, showed plainly the Indian, and yet from the color of the skin one would have doubted.

The explanation was a simple one; few Mexicans on the frontier but would have guessed it in an instant. One of the parents of the chief was red; the other, white.

The Comanche chiefs were noted for their liking for white squaws, and many a blooming Mexican girl cursed the hour when better fortune made her the captive—wife—slave, of some red-skinned warrior.

The White Mustang sat down in the circle of chiefs.

The pipe, filled with the fragrant weed, was passed from mouth to mouth.

The smoke wreaths floated on the air; they seemed to be omens of peace, but, in reality, were the harbingers of blood and slaughter.

The Apache-slayer was the first to speak.

The Comanche chiefs waited for two suns—the first rides the white cloud steep and dazzling the eyes of the earth with the glare of his golden robes;

the second rides the white horse of the prairie; he dazzles the eyes of all by the splendor of his deeds. Both are welcome."

The White Mustang inclined his head gravely at the compliment.

"The White Mustang has summoned his brothers to council—let them open their ears and they shall hear why. The Great

Spirit gave this land to the red-man—it is

his—and the white-skins must be driven back into the great salt lake from whence they came. Many moons ago, the lodges of the white-skins dotted the prairie; little by little have the red chiefs driven them back till the prairie no longer is pressed by the white foot; but their lodges are amid the canyons and by the rivers. They must be destroyed. The Mexican moon will soon come. The Comanche Nation must carry fire and steel to the walled lodges of the pale-face; not go as two, three bands, but as one."

The guttural sounds that came from the throats of the warriors told their intent.

"The White Mustang is a mighty warrior. When he trots the prairie, his foes fly like the dead grass before the wind," the Big Leaf said. "Let him say when the Comanches shall mount and ride to death."

The White Mustang rose to his feet and pointed to the crescent-shaped moon still visible in the sky.

"When the moon dies, and the new moon is born, then will the red warriors strike."

By the Sego lie the Mexican lodges that the white-skins call Dhanis. The lodge of Bandera guards the approach to the home of the pale-face. The Comanches will swoop on Bandera as the eagle darts from the tall pinion down upon his prey."

"It is good!" cried the Apache-slayer, and the other chiefs gravely nodded their consent.

The White Mustang took his seat again.

There was a moment of silence. The chief swept his dark eyes around the circle; a thoughtful expression was on his massive features.

"The chief would speak more?" Ah-hu-la said.

"The lodge of the White Mustang is cold; no singing-bird sings for the chief," the red brave replied.

"There are many maidens in the Comanche tribe who would gladly sing in the lodge of the White Mustang, for he is a great chief," Big Leaf responded, gravely.

"The singing-bird that the Comanche chief seeks does not dwell in the wigwams of his tribe, but his brothers can give her to him. She is a white-skin, the flower of Bandera. Her eyes are as black as the cloud of the angry spirit; her step as light as the elk stealing before the morning wind. The Mexicans call her Giraffe Bandera."

"It is good; the White Mustang shall have the Mexican singing-bird!" the Apache-slayer exclaimed.

"Wah!"

The cry of alarm came from the sentry. The warriors sprang to their feet and seized their weapons.

Rapidly approaching on the prairie was a single horseman. He was mounted on a sturdy steed, whose powerful limbs and massive neck betrayed its Spanish blood.

The stranger was clothed in a garb composed of skins of various wild beasts, curiously sewed together; the garb was tattered and torn as though the owner had ridden hard through brier and bramble.

The man was gigantic in form, a perfect Hercules. His face was massive, the eyes like coals of fire. His long black hair and beard floated down around his neck and shoulders like the mane of a lion.

The Comanches gazed with astonishment upon the stranger.

Straight forward toward them, despite their brandished weapons, the stranger spurred his steed.

A dozen paces off, he halted and leaped nimbly to the ground.

"I seek the chiefs of the Comanche Nation!" the stranger cried, speaking in the Indian tongue.

"The Comanches gazed upon him.

They asked themselves who was this man who spoke their language like a brother.

The stranger bore no weapons, except a broad-bladed hunting-knife thrust carelessly through his girdle.

"My brother seeks the Comanche chiefs; what would he with them?" the White Mustang asked.

"My strange brother speaks straight."

"Fight them to the death!" cried the stranger, a ringing note of defiance in his voice. The chiefs stared at each other in astonishment.

"My brother seeks the Comanches alone to dare them to the death!" the White Mustang asked.

"Yes; I am appointed by the minister of vengeance to be the slayer of the Comanches!" cried the stranger. "Red dogs, tremble! I am the Madman of the Plains, the Sword of Gideon. One by one I will fight you unto the death!" And the stranger drew the broad-bladed knife and stood in defiance.

CHAPTER VI.

PROOF AGAINST LEAD.

The Comanche chiefs looked at each other in grave astonishment. They could hardly believe their ears as they listened to the bold defiance of the strange being, clad in the garb of skins.

The White Mustang was the first to speak.

"My white brother speaks big; is his heart as big as his words? Does he not know that he is in the land of the Comanches—that he is helpless in the hands of the red-men?"

The stranger started at the sound of the White Mustang's voice, and gazed anxiously into his face. The warriors looked on in surprise.

The strange being passed his hand slowly across his brow, and a wild gleam came into his eyes.

"That voice," he murmured aloud, as if unconscious that listening ears were near; "it is her voice! Oh! how it comes back to me from the lapse of distant years! Again I see her dark eyes beaming with tenderness; again I hear the words of love coming from the scarlet lips; but all this is a dream," he added, wildly. "You are a chief among these red dogs, although your skin is as white as mine."

"My strange brother speaks straight."



Straight forward, over the flowery prairie, the madman urged on his wild career.

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They asked themselves who was this man who spoke their language like a brother.

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"My brother seeks the Comanche chiefs; what would he with them?" the White Mustang asked.

"My strange brother speaks straight."

The White Mustang is the great chief of the Comanche Nation," said the young brave, proudly.

"The Comanches are dogs, whose hearts are white! the prairie wolves shall come and howl in their wigwams; one by one, shall they fall beneath my hand, and, like a hungry coyote, I will lap up their hearts' blood, drop by drop!" cried the strange being.

A yell of defiance came from the throats of the red chiefs, as with brandis'ed weapons, they advanced upon the stranger.

With a motion swift as the forked lightning bursting from the thundercloud, the madman seized the White Mustang, bent him over his knee as if he had been but a slender boy instead of a stalwart warrior, and pointed the keen-edged knife at his heart. The point ripped open the stout buckskin shirt, and grazed the polished skin that shone like tinted marble beneath. The Comanches recoiled in horror.

So sudden had been the attack, that even the White Mustang, wily warrior that he was, had been taken entirely by surprise.

Vainly the chief struggled; he was but as a child in the powerful grasp of the stranger.

"It is written in the stars that the Comanches shall fall one by one by my hand!" cried the madman, wildly. "The sword of Gideon shall smite with righteous strength.

The blood of the Comanches shall stain my blade till the pure steel blushes crimson, and weeps scarlet tears. I am the Madman of the Plains—the angel of vengeance.

Fire and steel, bullet, arrow or knife alike, are powerless to harm me. My mission is vengeance. Even now I will give this red chief to death, and his soul to the flames below, but that her eyes look at me out of his. Accursed devil, why do you best her face?" And in his rage he brandished the glittering knife in the face of the young chief.

The iron features of the White Mustang never quailed, though death seemed so nigh. Slowly he closed his eyes, and the death-song of his tribe came slowly and lowly from his lips.

Transfixed with horror and astonishment, the red chiefs gazed upon the strange scene; spellbound, they moved neither hand nor foot.

"You are the chief of these red devils, whose souls are stained so deep with innocent blood, that angels' tears would not wash them clean, and yet I spare you. Her eyes in your face stay my hand, and bid me not to strike. But there will come a time when her eyes will not save you, human wolf that you are. For the present, you are safe. You shall live—live to commit more bloody acts, to stain your soul still deeper with innocent blood; but, sleeping or waking, in your wigwam or on the prairie, alone or surrounded by your red wolves, my face shall haunt you; my voice ring in your ears; you shall see the flash of my steel, live, but live a living death till in the torments of the doomed you shall call aloud for the avenging blow which brings forgetfulness and rest!"

Then, with a mighty effort, the madman lifted the White Mustang from his feet, and, swinging him in the air as if he had been a child, threw him, with tremendous force, from him into the circle of chiefs.

The Comanches, grouped together in a little knot, spellbound with wonder, did not anticipate this sudden movement, and the White Mustang, hurled sideways through the air with all the force of the stranger's astonishingly muscular arms, came against them with a terrible shock, and the red chiefs tumbled poll-mell to the earth.

With a leap, like unto the panther's in swiftness, the madman sprang to the side of his horse, and, with a single bound, vaulted into the saddle.

The noble beast waited not for word, touch of rein, or prick of spur, but, like an arrow forced from the bow, darted forward.

With a wild scream of defiance, the madman tossed his arms in the air, as he rode rapidly over the prairie.

The White Mustang was the first one of the Indians to recover his feet.

With a glance of horror he gazed upon the strange being who had held him so roughly.

"The animal that the greaser wants, eh?" asked Crockett.

"Yes; not that I think that he wants the horse, only that he judges that it capture is impossible. He hates me; wishes some chance to annoy me. He knows full well that I value my rifle highly; he wishes to deprive me of it, and so banter me into this wager. If I had refused it, he would have openly proclaimed that I was afraid to undertake the task of subduing 'The Lightning,' and thus throw a doubt upon my courage. He loves this beautiful Mexican girl, and fears that I may attempt to rival him."

"I reckon he knows what he's about; he didn't stand any more chance with you in attempting to captivate the feelings of that full-blown sunflower, than a coon would attempt to hug a bear to death," Crockett said, shrewdly.

"Your friendship makes you look with a more favorable eye upon my chances than they deserve," Gilbert replied, with a doubtful shake of his head.

"Not a mite!" Crockett cried, emphatically. "But, I say, Gil, Jerusalem can't stand this pace much longer; the he-beast is a-gettin' tuckered; I kin tell it by his ears; they're givin' to lop over, and that's a sign he's got 'bout all he wants."

The madman saw the motion, guessed the intention of the Indian, but held his place silent and motionless as a statue; on his horse proud defiance.

A moment the dark eye of the White Mustang glanced along the iron tube, then, obedient to the pressure of his finger, the hammer fell; the sparks that came from the flint proved that its heart was fire.

A puff of smoke—a tongue of flame, and the leaden ounce sped on its way.

Breathlessly the warrior watched the horseman.

His massive figure stood out dark against the sky as though carved out of stone.

The ball whistled harmlessly by his head; the arm of the White Mustang had trembled, his aim had been untrue.

With a groan the chief dashed the useless weapon down to the earth.

Hoarsely and with mocking accent the laugh of the madman rang out on the prairie breeze.

With a cry of desperation, the red chief snatched the other musket; there were but two in the party—from the hands of Ah-hu-la.

"Fire, red wolf!" cried the horseman, in derision, perceiving the intention of the chief; "bullet and steel alike I defy; the lightnings of heaven alone have power on me. Mortal arms and mortal weapons can not harm me!"

On the wings of the wind came the darts words to the ears of the chiefs, and as the madman spoke he extended his arms as if he wished to expose his breast to the bullet.

With a sudden frown upon his features, the White Mustang drew the musket to his shoulder; carefully and slowly he glanced his eye along the barrel. With an effort that taxed all his power, he stilled the leaping blood within his veins which had unnerved him.

Once again the warriors held their breath in great suspense, as if the very sound that told of human life would work some direful harm.

Again the hammer fell, again the darts met in close embrace and the sparks flew; again the white smoke-puff, the quivering flash of flame, and the leaden messenger of death cut its way through the intrepid air.

Eye true—aim sure and arm firm as rock!

The once ball struck the madman full in the breast—the aim was for the heart; scarce half an inch above, the bullet spent its force.

The madman reeled in the saddle!

Then in the throats of the red chiefs gathered the notes of joy, but they pealed not on the air, for a second the madman sat again like a rock in the saddle.

The bullet dropped, flattened, to the earth.

The madman was unharmed.

The Comanches gazed upon him with awe-stricken faces. The White Mustang seemed like one turned into stone.

With clenched hand brandished in the air, breathing defiance, the strange being spoke:

"A hundred years shall come and go, but I shall still live to smite the braves of the Comanche Nation. I can not die while a red wolf of that tribe treads the prairie; father and son alike shall fall until their bones piled one upon the other shall make a ladder for me to mount to the skies and pluck down the blazing stars; blood shall flow till the green prairie be as scarlet as the gory soul of the red slayer!"

And while the blood-curdling laugh of the madman rang on the air and froze the life-current of the red-men within their veins, he wheeled his horse around and dashed onward at headlong speed.

"He flies from us—he fears!" cried the White Mustang, who alone of all the chiefs seemed not wholly spellbound by horror.

"The ball struck him full in the breast, yet he shows no wound!" exclaimed the Big Leaf, in wonder.

"The powder was bad—the force of the ball spent ere it struck him," the White Mustang replied. "Did it not shake him in the saddle? If he was a white devil the ball would have passed through him as through the air."

The Comanches opened their eyes widely at this reasoning, and stared at one another.

"The White Mustang will take his scalp, be he man or devil!" cried the chief, fiercely, as he vaulted into the saddle. "Who follows?"

Not one remained behind, and in a minute more the red warriors were racing over the prairie.

CHAPTER VII.

CHASING THE LIGHTNING.

SWIFTLY onward over the rolling prairie rode the two Americans in chase of the flying steed and the helpless rider, so strangely fastened onto its back.

The wolves, alarmed at the presence of the new-comers, with howls of rage gave up the chase, and bending their course to the west, disappeared behind one of the prairie islands.

Side by side, Gilbert the Mustanger and Crockett rode on. The wiry mustang of the latter making tremendous efforts to keep up with the swift, blooded brown mare ridden by the Mustanger.

"By heaven, it is 'The Lightning!'" Gilbert exclaimed, as the black horse ascended one of the prairie swells, and his form stood out in bold relief against the sky.

"The animal that the greaser wants, eh?" asked Crockett.

"Yes; not that I think that he wants the horse, only that he judges that it capture is impossible. He hates me; wishes some chance to annoy me. He knows full well that I value my rifle highly; he wishes to deprive me of it, and so banter me into this wager. If I had refused it, he would have openly proclaimed that I was afraid to undertake the task of subduing 'The Lightning,' and thus throw a doubt upon my courage. He loves this beautiful Mexican girl, and fears that I may attempt to rival him."

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"Fire, red wolf!" cried the horseman, in derision, perceiving the intention of the chief; "bullet and steel alike I defy; the lightnings of heaven alone have power on me. Mortal arms and mortal weapons can not harm me!"

through the soft bottom-land of the Rio Sabinal.

On the polished skin of the helpless girl, so cruelly bound to the back of the wild steed, the drops of blood were standing; the lashings which held her in her place had cut into the soft flesh and drawn forth the visible evidence of terrible pain.

Side by side the two Americans rode in pursuit. The heaving flanks of Crockett's mustang told plainly of strength overtaxed; the brown mare, though, chafed and tugged at the bit; she felt all the excitement of the chase, and panted to display the speed which she was capable of, for as yet she had not exerted her utmost strength.

"By hookey, Gil, the little cuss can't stand this much longer," Crockett exclaimed. "Say, hadn't I better pull up an' try a rifle-shot on that black beast?"

"But the danger of hitting the woman!"

"Right smart chance of that, I reckon," replied the hunter, dubiously.

"She is dead also as well as the horse?"

"No, she lives, by hookey!" Crockett replied.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 102.)

The Dark Secret: or, The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XXVI.—CONTINUED.

For a brief time it seemed as if the change of scene and air had really been of service to Augusta, and that both health and spirits were improving; but it was only a momentary rallying, that soon passed away, and left her spiritless and drooping as before. Her former dark despair and wild bursts of anguish and remorse, alike seemed to have passed away, and a dead, inane listlessness—a dull, lifeless stupor—a blank, hopeless calm, terrible to see, had taken their place. For hours she would sit with folded hands, white, cold, and voiceless, her large, dark eyes fixed on the floor; a living automaton, a breathing statue, a moving figure of ice. Mr. De Vere was in despair; no effort could rouse her from her lethargy; no excitement could win a smile from her; no delight could awake her from her trance.

Disbrowe was puzzled and interested, his curiosity was excited, and that mingled with a feeling of pity, made him half-determined to ask the reason of this mysterious grief. He felt that this very secrecy itself was augmenting the original source of her trouble, whatever it might be; and that once she took some one into her confidence, this morbid sinking, from sheer lack of sympathy, would vanish like morning mists before the sun. As a nettle, which sharply stings if faintly touched, is harmless if boldly grasped, so inward grief, if nursed in silence, festers and rankles, while, daintlessly confronted, it hides its diminished head, and sinks comparatively into nothing.

One still, serene moonlight night, leaving Mr. De Vere dozing over the *Times*, and *Orlando* amusing himself with her *bones* and a book of prints, Disbrowe strolled idly out, attracted by the gentle lurch of the charmed hour. Sauntering down the long, shaded, laurel walk, he suddenly stopped in astonishment at beholding Augusta, half-sitting, half-lying on a bench, her long hair, unbound and soaked with the night-dew, streaming around her; her face hidden in her hands, her whole attitude so full of woe, so crushed, so heart-broken, that a thrill of terror and pity shot through the young earl's heart.

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"No—no! there is no such hope for me; her brother and the chief of tribe still live to prove its truth; and to make assurance doubly sure, she told me to ask himself, and see if her story was not true."

"And did you?"

"Yes, he came a short time after your arrival, and wrote to appoint a meeting one night, and that night I met him for the last time."

Her voice choked, and she stopped. Disbrowe thought of the dark, muffled figure he had seen with her that night at the north wing.

"I told him all; and, oh, Alfred, word for word it was true. He had been stolen in his infancy; he did remember old Till perfectly, and he had escaped just as Grizelle told me. Oh! that last dreadful parting! God grant I might ever forget it!"

"And this, then, is your secret, Augusta?"

"This my secret—my dark, terrible secret—that is gnawing away my very heart—that in a few brief months will bring me to my grave. May God forgive us both, for we little thought of this!"

"And he—where is he, Augusta?"

"A wanderer over the wide world. We will never meet again."

She sunk down once more on her seat, prostrate, despairing. A bright gleam of moonlight broke through the quivering laurel leaves, and fell like the wing of some pitying angel on that despairing young head.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RESURGAM.

"With wild surprise,
As if to marble struck, devoid of sense,
A single moment motionless he stood."

—THOMSON.

"LORD AUSTREY, my lord."

It was Mr. Norton—that respectable gentleman's gentleman—who spoke. Disbrowe, after his usual easy fashion, was lounging in his own room, chatting with Orrie, but on hearing his friend's name announced, he sprang to his feet with a suddenness quite startling.

"Lord Austrey—when? how? where?"

"Whither—why—wherefore?" exclaimed the well-known voice of Lord Austrey, himself, as he unceremoniously entered. "I took the liberty of entering *sans cérémonie*, you see. Earnecliffe, mon ami, how goes it?"

"Austrey, my dear old fellow!" exclaimed Disbrowe, "welcome back! When did you come?"

"Two or three days ago. Hallo! a young lady in the case! Why, Alf, what have you been about since I left?"

"Oh! this is a little Yankee friend of mine, Oriole De Vere—oh! she's gone! Well, Austrey, how has the world been using you lately?"

"Enchantingly—I'm a made man, Earnecliffe, and the happiest fellow in England!"

"Ah, indeed! when am I to offer my congratulations?"

"As soon as you like—the honeymoon's over."

"What?" cried Disbrowe, starting to his feet, "you don't mean to say—"

"My dear fellow, don't get excited! I do say it—nothing shorter. Lady Austrey awaits your congratulations in London."

"And you are really married?"

"Just so! Miss Norma Macdonald no longer exists, and from her grave has risen Lady George Austrey—the handsomest peeress in England! Sharp work, my boy, eh?"

"Puisse-*z* vous être heureux!" said Disbrowe, as he laughingly shook his friend by the hand. "I wish you joy with all my heart. Where were you married?"

"At Rome, at the ambassador's, two months ago."

"And you have come home for good and all now?"

"Yes, if you call Castle Hill, Inverness, home. We are going there as soon as Lelia leaves England."

"Lelia—who is she?"

Lord George fairly jumped from his seat. "Why, you old hermit—you anchorite—you St. John of the Desert—you never mean to say you don't know who Lelia is!"

"If you mean the French tragedy-queen of that name."

"French! She's no more French than I am; she's English, man alive! Oh, ye gods! it takes away my breath only to think of her. Lelia—the queen—the enchantress—the siren—the Melpomene—the conqueress! Whew! Earnecliffe, I want a glass of ice-water to cool me down after speaking of her—the little devouring flame of fire!"

"Really?" said Disbrowe, dryly, "extraordinary transports these for a married man. I have heard of, or, rather, read of this Mademoiselle Lelia; for the papers are full of her. She is then, so pretty?"

"Pretty? Earnecliffe, if I had a loaded pistol here, upon my soul I would have it in me to blow your brains out for applying that word to her. Pretty—faugh! She's glorious—maddening—divine! That's what she is! You might as well say a tornado—a sheet of lightning—a storm at sea—was pretty, as Lelia."

"Indeed! Rather a desperate little article she must be. So she has come to England. I thought she had been fifty times offered a small fortune, and refused."

"So she did. She came with us."

"With you?" said Disbrowe, with a stare.

"Yes, with us! She made one of our party. She and Norma are like sisters."

The strangest smile went wandering round Disbrowe's lips, and shone bright in his eyes, when he fixed them on the face of his friend.

"Lelia, the actress, and Lady Austrey!"

"Yes, Lelia, the actress," said Lord George, defiantly. "Your cold English pride will have no cause to strain itself trying to stoop to her. She is the equal of any woman, peeress or not, in all broad England. I have seen her dancing with archdukes and royal highnesses without number; she has been an honored guest in the home of a duchess. Her life is above reproach, as she likely is above want. It is not necessity makes her play—she has already acquired for herself a fortune; but she has a passion for her art. Oh, Earnecliffe! what a dazzling creature she is! She has flashed like a meteor through Europe, blinding, dazzling, electrifying wherever she went. No body knows who or what she is, except you will wonder when I tell you—Norma!"

"Norma! how came she to know?"

"Well, my dear fellow, that is the strangest part of the business. It was at Florence we saw her first—as Cleopatra, I think, and a glorious queen she made, for whom a thousand heroes might die. Every eye was, of course, bent upon her the moment she appeared; and Norma half rose, and then fell back in her seat. I looked at her, and upon my honor, Earnecliffe, I

never was so startled in my life; her face was perfectly colorless, her eyes darkening and dilating, and her lips white and trembling.

I spoke to her, but she only grasped my arm and made a motion for me to keep still, without ever removing her eyes from the stage. I confess I was puzzled, rather; but I thought it best to bide my time, and let her ladyship have her own way; and faith, she had it, too—for, before Cleopatra had uttered half a dozen words, she gave a low cry, and fell back fainting—stif, sir, in a dead swoon!"

"Hum-m-m! Very strange, indeed! What then?"

"Why, we brought her home, of course: but as soon as she recovered, she insisted on going back—no persuasion could induce her to remain; and she peremptorily ordered me to give a small note she wrote to the manager of the theater to be delivered to Madame Lelia. Well, sir, he did it; and the next thing was an earnest request from Lelia herself, that Norma would wait in her private dressing-room until after the play."

"And did she?"

"Yes; and a precious long interview they had of it. Like the 'five minutes' it takes a lady to put on her bonnet, it was over two hours before she made her appearance; and then in such a state of delight, by George! if my Jewish money-lender Christian and burned his books, I could get up to such a pitch of rapture."

"Well, what was the result?"

"Why, Lelia became our traveling companion, or we hers—I don't know which—from that day until we reached Paris. And then, to the great surprise of every one, she accepted an offer from Mr. M—, of—Theater, to make her *debut* in London, and astonish the natives, as I flatter myself she will do, slightly."

"And was our aristocratic friend, Miss Emily Tremain, reconciled to the idea of travelling *en famille* with an actress?"

"Reconciled? I should think so; and very proud and important she felt about it—for where archduchesses smile, it is not for insular aristocracy to sneer. And then Lelia fascinates every one she meets. She is irresistible, my boy: so take care of your heart."

"It stands in no danger. I have a counter-charm, strong enough to protect me even against the all-powerful fascinations of this tragic muse. But this mystery between her and Norma—what does it mean?"

"That is just what I wish you would tell me; for be hanged if I have the least idea. Norma only laughs and says: 'Wait, the *denouement* is at hand!'

"Humph! Rather singular! Is it another act of high treason to ask what this meteor looks like?"

"Well, Norma made me promise to tell you nothing until you would see for yourself."

"Really?"

"Oh, well, after all, what difference does it make, Earnecliffe? It is only a woman's whim, and your curiosity will soon be gratified, for Lelia plays to-night, and, of course, you will be there to worship like the rest of London."

"Can't, my dear fellow; couldn't think of such a thing."

"What! you're not in earnest?" cried Lord Austrey, agast.

"Never was I more so, as I remember."

"Why, you're crazy—downright mad, you know. What's the reason?"

"Well, I have some friends staying here with me, and I can't leave them."

"Bring them with you."

"Humph! Well, of course, if they would like to go, that might do; if not—"

"If not, you go alone. I have said it. Norma commanded me, under pain of her entire displeasure, and half a score of the severest sort of curtain-lectures, to bring you along; so, will ye, nill ye, come you, will. Not a word. I won't take any excuses; so don't go to the trouble of making them."

"Oh, but positively, you know—"

"Oh, but positively I know I won't! Who are those friends of yours?"

"My uncle, Mr. De Vere; my cousin, Miss De Vere; and that little girl you saw, from America."

"Well, bring them along, of course.

They want to see Lelia, too—supposing they are not barbarians, like you. Come, you will just have time to dress and be at Mrs. Tremain's in time for dinner."

"Well, there is no resisting you, I see. Make yourself at home, while I go and consult my respected uncle on the subject."

"All right! only hurry up—there is no time to spare. I wouldn't miss seeing Lelia play 'Jeanne D'Arc' to-night for 'The Crown Diamonds'! Tell the old gentleman, with my respects, that I won't take 'No' for an answer, at any price!"

Disbrowe laughed, and sauntered out, and after a brief period, returned with his uncle, to whom he presented Lord George, with due decorum.

"You have met with better success than I am; she's English, man alive! Oh, ye gods! it takes away my breath only to think of her. Lelia—the queen—the enchantress—the siren—the Melpomene—the conqueress! Whew! Earnecliffe, I want a glass of ice-water to cool me down after speaking of her—the little devouring flame of fire!"

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and wishing her joy, completely himself—his easy, self-possessed self again.

She had met him so frankly and freely, looked in his eyes with a smile so bright and happy, laid her hand in his so promptly, that all his confusion passed away. She started violently as she saw who accompanied him, and turned upon him a look of eager inquiry.

"My American relatives," he said, in a low tone, surprised by her strange, questioning look.

As Lord George introduced her to Mr. De Vere and his daughter, she bowed, while the blood mounted to her temple. Very strange, thought Disbrowe, lost in wonder at this school-girl blush of the calm, graceful, high-bred lady.

Something about Lady Austrey seemed to strike Mr. De Vere; for he fixed his eyes on her face with a look at once so pensive, so searching, and so full of a strange recognition, that as she looked up, and caught his involuntary stare, she crimsoned again, and half-turned away.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. De Vere, hastily, becoming conscious of his rudeness; "but, really, your ladyship's face struck me; it was so familiar. Alfred, does Lady Austrey remind you of any one you ever saw before?"

"Yes, sir. I have often thought she strikingly resembled that Spanish boy, Jacinto."

"The very one! The likeness is most extraordinary, and the expression is the same exactly!"

Norma tried to laugh; but her face was scarlet.

"Who was Jacinto, may I ask?" said Lord George.

"A young Spaniard I met in New Jersey, he might have been Lady Austrey's twin brother—he looked so like her."

"And was our aristocratic friend, Miss Emily Tremain, reconciled to the idea of travelling *en famille* with an actress?"

"Reconciled? I should think so; and very proud and important she felt about it. Norma only laughs and says: 'Wait, the *denouement* is at hand!'

"That is just what I wish you would tell me; for be hanged if I have the least idea. Norma only laughs and says: 'Wait, the *denouement* is at hand!'

"That depends—yes, I think she will. Would you like her to do so?"

"Me! Why, what possible interest can it have for me?"

She looked up with the queerest smile, but said nothing.

"Do you suppose I will fall in love with her?" he could not help asking, provoked by her smile.

"Oui, monsieur."

"I had rather be excused. Stage-players are not in my line. I could not love an actress, if she were a very goddess of beauty—a Venus herself."

"Prenes garde, monsieur! do not be too sure. You can do as you please, however. Most certainly neither I nor Lelia will ask you to do so."

"Has she many lovers?"

"Legally."

"Wealthy and titled?"

"Yes, my lord. She refused the hand of his highness the Duc de B—, at Villette; so

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In the forthcoming serial from the pen of the well-known

MRS. E. F. ELLET,

which we shall soon commence in our columns, we have a singular history, that of a

WOMAN WITH TWO LIVING HUSBANDS

—a virtual parallel of the exquisite incident commemorated in Tennyson's beautiful poem of Enoch Arden, but wholly unlike that sad, sweet story.

INTENSE DRAMATIC INTEREST

which Mrs. Ellet has made the leading element of her powerful and enticing romance of

MAGDALENE'S MARRIAGE;

or, WHOSE WIFE WAS SHE?

Lovers of love stories will find in this something more than a commonplace version of the "Divine Passion." It is wholly unique and will create a profound impression.

Our Arm-Chair.

Don't Leave the Farm!—The tendency toward towns, which seems to animate farmers' sons, and the young men of the country villages, is a matter of such moment that our wisest men are trying to devise some practicable remedy for what they justly regard as an evil. That the larger towns and cities of all the land have a surfeit of young men—that all the professions are overstocked—that trade is immensely overdone, and that real laborers and producers are too few—all are self-evident propositions; and the young man on the farm who leaves the tillage of the soil to seek other employ, knows that he at once becomes a competitor in a race where one in ten only can by any possibility win. But this knowledge, and all the hazards which are sure to confront him do not deter the country boy from his townward drift.

The evils resulting from this state of things are manifold. It affects the old soil-tiller, by leaving him short of help, and he gives up the culture of the land from inability to work it. Next, the young man inevitably seeks channels of employ already overfull, and this begets trouble, low wages and eventually crime; for, being defeated in the pursuit of gain in an honest way, the temptation to dishonesty and speculation lures thousands into forbidden paths. Then the resolve to leave the farm begets an indifference to special acquirement, and the young man really enters upon life anew at twenty-one—his previous experience being all wasted knowledge in his town life. This is a waste of precious years and good experience, which, if the young man had remained upon the farm, would have borne happy results.

All these, and other evils, follow this strange infatuation of our youth to crowd into towns—to live without what they call "hard work"—to play the "gentleman"—to become quickly rich. As if the soil-tiller was not the real lord of the realm—as if the farm was not the best place in the world to live on—as if the intelligence and happiness of the country home could not become supreme!

We have but one word of advice to offer our young country friends: don't leave a certainty for an uncertainty. The farm is the certainty—the town life the uncertainty. The farm life, by a resolve to make it intelligent, can become by far the most genial and satisfactory of all ways of livelihood; and never, in America, will that "good time" come, which is to bring wide-spread content and happiness, until our farmers' boys, and our tradesmen's sons, and mechanics' lads, learn to love the land which their own hands shall till.

Dissatisfied People.—Many letters that drift across the editor's table prove this to be true—that very few persons are satisfied with their positions in life. Girls wish for a "better circle" to move in; boys want to be rich and great in a year's time; young men fret under the harness of necessary toil and trouble; and so the record runs—almost every other person you meet, if you can get at them in confidential converse, are dissatisfied.

Now, is not this both wrong and foolish? This life is so rich in rewards for all well-doing—there is so much happiness, for all who know how to garner it—that, to our apprehension, answers poorly for the person who, having health and youth, complains of fate, and goes through the world grumbling. A little good sense, an honest independence, and a resolve to be happy, in whatever sphere the person moves, would greatly add to the aggregate of our life-rewards and our years.

Stage Life.—A correspondent from St. Louis writes:

"I think I have talent for the stage. I am a good speaker (rehearser); I mimic or imitate well; I appreciate the drama and know what is good playing, so why should I not become an actor?"

Eminent dramatic talent there is always room, as there is for an eminent doctor, lawyer or preacher; but for mediocre talent there really is no want. Good stock actors to-day are not by any means secure in a steady engagement, and wages with such average lower than in any other profession for the same comparative standing. A good many most excellent men and women playwrights are compelled to abandon the large city theaters for engagements in troupes which travel because there is no room for them on the "stock" lists.

And this surfeit will always continue, since hundreds of impulsive, inexperienced and over-confident people every year, rush into the dramatic profession only to add to the already large list of those who barely sustain themselves by their utmost devotion to their work.

Select some other vocation than that of actor, or, if you will not be thus advised, prepare yourself for the stage by the severest mental discipline which you can undergo, for only by discipline can you ever hope for any thing like eminent success.

THE NEIGHBOR I LIKE.

She keeps the affairs of others to herself, and never lets any thing ruffle the smooth surface of her temper. She never judges others; and, if she does find one of her neighbors going wrong, she consoles herself with the thought that perhaps she isn't as bad as she is made out to be.

She never neglects her own work, to notice what others are about; and never keeps an account of how many barrels of flour this person or that person has in a year.

She can not tell you whether Mr. Z. buys his tea by the pound or half pound, and is not acquainted enough with Mr. X.'s affairs to know whether he pays his debts or not. If she doesn't visit all the sewing-circles, it is because she has her own house to take care of, and that her own children's garments require her spare time.

If she hears of a family in destitute circumstances, she does not stop to deliberate whether the poverty has been brought on by extravagance, and does not wait to call a meeting of her friends to decide as to the propriety of doing some good for the sufferers, but she goes and does it!

If I am in trouble, I can find a true sympathizer in her, and she'll keep all the little secrets I impart to her.

She does not believe in this wholesale telling of what is said about people. If it is of ill report, she knows it will make me feel uncomfortable, and she locks it up in her heart.

If the young folks desire to get up some amusement, she doesn't crush it all by her talk of its "being foolish," etc.; but she sends word that if she can be of any assistance, we must not hesitate to call upon her; and, as a reward, she gains their hearty good will.

If never troubles her to have people arrive and depart, without their communicating all their family history, prospects, etc. It is none of her affairs, and she prefers not to know.

She never borrows my newspaper or magazines, preferring to have her own, and if she can't afford to take them, she doesn't borrow them. Knowing this, what real pleasure it gives me to see that she does read mine!

She makes it a rule not to meddle with other people's children, believing that her own brood needs as much of her care as she can give.

Strange to say she does not believe all that the papers contain, but she believes that moral truths can be shown to advantage under the guise of fiction—which shows her good sense—and thinks a book should not be thrown aside merely because it is not the real, actual truth.

If your plans do not turn out to the best advantage, and you are feeling quite ill, concerning them, she doesn't act as a "Job's comforter," and exclaim: "There, didn't I tell you so?" or "I knew how it would be!" No, she says: "Never mind; we can't all foresee how things will turn out, and it's best not to brood over our troubles, for they are always sent for some good end, even if we can not see it at the time."

She never interferes with me in any way, and will not remark throughout the neighborhood that I am "remarkably unsociable," just because I am not able to leave off my writing to attend to her. If she sees I am busy, she makes an excuse and leaves, calling at a time when I am disengaged; then, of course, I am very glad to see her.

Fashions trouble her but little; and if a person's garments are not exactly what she considers to be becoming, she keeps her tongue quiet, and doubtless thinks that everyone must be allowed to have a taste of their own. That shows her wisdom.

We've all got our agreeable and disagreeable neighbors, haven't we? Now, ladies, when you get your rights (?) which will you vote for, the woman who minds her own business or her who minds everybody's affairs but her own? **EVE LAWLESS.**

A GOOD TRAIT.

A FRIEND of mine, the other day, had been questioning me concerning one of my friends whom I valued highly, and naturally I was prone to give him as good a character as I thought he was deserving of. At the close of my remarks I said: "Well, now, what is your opinion of him?" He answered me very frankly and candidly: "I don't like him."

"May I ask why?" I responded.

"I do not like to say; as you think well of him, I do not wish to lower him in your estimation, by saying what my reasons are," was his answer.

A true sermon in a very few words—a lesson in brief—a moral, without a long story to it—and a Christian deed in a short maxim. He did not hint around, or insinuate this thing or that; although he could not like him or praise him to me, he would not lower him in my estimation. His few words saved me a deal of trouble. Had he told me his reasons for dislike, the chances are, I should have thought less of him, and the friendship I had for my other friend might have diminished. It is a decidedly good thing to think before you speak, as the above case plainly shows.

If it is in the nature of your humanity to say evil of others, let it be a secret locked within the breast, the key turned upon it, and the key thrown into mid-ocean. If every one had this noble trait of my friend there would be very little scandal. Gossip would run short of stock, and be compelled to open store by minding their own affairs, which they should have done long before this. No one living but has some fault, and no existing creature, however vile, but there is a germ of goodness somewhere. The Lord has said that Charity is greater than Faith and Hope, and by Charity is not only meant the giving of your large stores to others, even if you do it with ever so ready a hand; it means that you should be charitable to your neighbors' faults and shortcomings; and when you can not say good of a person, keep silent. Silence will rarely bring you into trouble or turmoil, and being cheap, it is also profitable. Think what you please, but don't strive to make others think

such a person is bad, simply because you do not like him.

Reports circulate very freely and quickly in our day, and like the old-time poem of the "Three Black Cows," you will find they grow, instead of lose, as they travel.

Cultivate this noble trait of keeping still in your evil thoughts of others. Better not have these thoughts at all, yet if they will come to you, don't blazon them out to others. You want not others to speak ill of you, then why speak ill of them? Be true to others as you would be to yourself.

"To thine own self be true; and keep Thy mind from sloth, thy heart from soil; Press on! and thou shalt surely reap A heavenly harvest for thy toil."

F. S. F.

SHORT LECTURES ON DRESS.

BY THE "FAT CONTRIBUTOR."

HATS.

No gentleman can be said to be completely dressed without a hat, unless by some chance the gentleman has lost his head, when, of course, head covering would be superfluous.

Coverings for the head have been of a great variety of shapes and patterns. The original was a good head of hair, but that has been out of fashion for a long time. To uncover the head before one's superior is a very ancient custom. The well-meaning though impetuous American savage insists upon an observance of the custom with so much vehemence that he sometimes takes the hair quite off a man's head. Wigs are useful as well as ornamental under such circumstances. A friend of mine once fell among Indians while crossing the plains and escaped being scalped by a mere scratch.

The stove-pipe hat is very much worn among gentlemen, yet it isn't safe to consider every man a "slouch" who wears a slouch hat. The stove-pipe hat received its name on account of a tradition to the effect that the first hat of the kind was made on a stove-pipe. I never made a hat on a stove-pipe—but I have made one on a horse-race.

Young men who go courting should be particular what sort of tile they wear. I once knew a very excellent youth who was refused by a young lady, simply because she "didn't like his style."

When Kossoff came to this country in pursuit of Hungarian independence, which he seemed to have some difficulty in finding at home, he introduced the Kossoff hat, which was universally worn in a very short time. The original "Kossoff" had feather in it. Sympathy for the Hungarian cause ran high in those days, and to give outward expression to it was considered a feather in any man's cap. I have known men to go Hungary for days in order to sport a Kossoff hat and feather.

Bear-skin hats are only worn by the military. Looking down on the tops of men's heads in the church or theater, and counting the bare skins their shining scalps present, one can estimate the number of military present.

Straw hats are cool in summer, though they are much cooler in the winter. You rarely see a straw hat in the country that wasn't kept over from last summer.

I went out fishing on Lake Erie once, all alone, in a straw hat. The boat sprung a leak two miles from shore, and I had to bail it out with my hat to keep afloat. I got ashore at length, but realized how hard it was to get out on *straw-bail*.

Panama hats are not so fashionable as they once were. They are made in Massachusetts for the most part, and Panama didn't hear of them until a short time ago.

Native Mexicans wear a sombrero. I bought a sombrero while I was in Mexico, and found it was some boro while the rest was imitation.

Quakers wear a broad-brim hat. William Penn was a Quaker, and he was (broad) brimful of benevolence and charity, combined with that very excellent Quaker quality, the knack of getting the best end of a bargain. In his celebrated treaty with the Indians he showed how the Penn was mightier than the tomahawk. I can imagine the smile of benignant love which met those beneath his broad-brimmed hat as he exchanged little strips of red flannel, bits of looking-glass, children's marbles, hotel cards, etc., for the territory of Pennsylvania.

After going "all around my hats," I might say a word about caps. There is the cloth cap, fur cap, skating cap, base-ball cap, and "cap" for various other little games; smoking-cap, fatigue-cap, and night-cap. When the "night-cap" consists of a hot whisky punch, it is generally a Scotch cap. Then follow percussion-cap, knee-cap, cap the climax, and "All right, Cap!"

Finally, my hearers, it makes very little difference what kind of a hat or cap you wear so that your head is level; and remember, it is better to wear a shocking bad hat soberly than the most fashionable and glistening castor with a "brick" in it.

FLOWER CULTURE.

THERE is certainly no work that affords at the same time such a tonic for the mind and body as that performed in the open air among flowers. The very consciousness that we are not working for any gross utilitarian purpose, but are, in our small way, helping to bring forth beautiful forms, colors, and perfumes, lifts us for the time above the created, and nearer the Creator; gives us a hint of the delicious enthusiasm that fills the artist soul when it blossoms in a poem or a picture. While the blood, exhilarated with its supplies of oxygen, reddens the cheek, and rushes joyfully through the veins, the heart forgetting its narrow cares, its petty triumphs and defeats, grows humble, and pure, and opens itself to the sweet influences around it, as the flowers to the sun and dew. And what a fresh, sweet pleasure to watch a favorite plant from the moment when the first delicate green pierces the brown earth, through all its lovely development, till at last it stands perfect, wearing its crown of blossoms:

"The winter is over and gone."

The bright days now and then tempt us beyond the streets, and already the moist air brings to our tread, and the air brings to our senses something vague and indescribable; something that we are never conscious of in any other season; now we begin to think of our flower-beds, and our borders, and are interested in the lore of bulbs and tubers and seeds. Apropos of this interest, a bit of information concerning a flower rarely seen in our gardens, yet much sought for its beauty and fragrance, may not be amiss:

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The tube rose is a native of the East Indies, but was carried westward over two hundred years ago. Until very lately all the dried bulbs from which the flower is grown were exported from Italy, but they are beginning to be successfully ripened in New Jersey.

An authority says: "The great want of success in growing this plant is caused by too poor a soil, too little water, and too little heat at the root. A hot bed is necessary, though it be of the simplest kind. About the first of April, select tubers by their size and firmness, and their absence of offsets; prepare seven-inch pots, with the usual drainage, charcoal below; prepare the roots by removing the outer scale or coating, and any embryo offsets that may be detected; put them in the compost, just covering them from sight, and then fill the pot with spent bark of tan, and plunge the pot to the rim in tan, which, by the way, we deem the very best material in which to plunge pots in the hot-bed, as it retains well the heat and moisture. Soon they begin to strike root, and the foliage to show its tips; then give slight waterings till indications of 'spindling' appear; then increase the water so much as to solve to some extent the broken manure, and thereby allow of consolidation by firm pressure upon the top surface; watch closely for offsets, and as they appear, split them off by inserting the thumb between them and the parent, keeping the strength where it is needed. The best practice is to retain them in the pots, and keep the pots in the hot beds, unless they become so tall as to interfere with the sashes. When blossoms begin to appear, remove them to an arbor, or any sheltered place, to secure shade to some extent, and thus preserve the natural delicacy of the flower.

F. M. B.

Foolscap Papers.

Our New House.

OUR new house is completed, and, as we have just got into it and settled down, we would be pleased to see our friends. The house is of the newest style. It was the solo artichoke and superintendent. It has four stories—taken from the SATURDAY JOURNAL by permission of the Editor—and was shingled by a No. 1 barbers with a pair of shears.

The eaves and Adams of the roof are supported by elaborate parenthetical brackets. The general design of the house is the Ionic—Nick being the carpenter's name who did the work.

The rooms are all circularly square and plastered with the porous plaster; the ceilings are painted in imitation of the firmament with all the stars and a few comets, so brilliant that we are in starlight at any time.

The windows have all been all furnished with the regular military sash with counterpanes, and capped with cast-iron night-caps, and there are several bay-ram windows, and as the wood-work is all beautifully finished, owing to the coming damp weather, the effect is very fine, and the mantelpieces are finely inlaid with mother of pearl and of coral.

The house is all circularly square and plastered with

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THE RIVAL MONARCHS.

BY FRANK M. IMBIE.

'Tis eve, the monarch comes again,
Bidding his glittering sentinels
Their girls kiss and muse
He comes his glistening scoter o'er
The broad, unfathomed sea;
And hangs his glistening panoply
On mountain crest and tree.
Beneath his vast, unbounded sway,
Silence and danger tread slow,
The earth, wrapped in that halo, seems
A city in the dead of night.
A man has joined his glistening train,
His power is well-nigh gone;
His body-guard, with pallor white,
Vanish one by one.
Laving in billowy, foamy clouds,
The morning queen appears,
Quaffing from out her jeweled cup
On high's proudest terrace.
She bids her robes down enclose,
And splendor yet unfold.
Bursts forth; her aerial messengers
Are robes in molten gold.
She flings her blazoned banners out,
And garbed in roseate hue
She steps upon her burnished throne
Spreading with her golden dew.
The bairn of air, with molten rings,
Whiles one triumphal lay
Is wafted from the waking world
To greet the Queen of day!

Tracked to Death: THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID,
AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COON HUNTER AT HOME.

There was yet a lingering ray of day-light in the cleared ground of Ephraim Darke's plantation when the coon-hunter, returning from his interrupted chase, got back to the negro quarter. He had entered it, as already told, with stealthy tread, and looking cautiously around him. For he knew that some of his fellow-slaves were aware of his having gone out "a-cooning" and would wonder at his early return—to early to pass without observation. If seen by them he might be asked for an explanation, and this he was not prepared to give.

This it was that caused him to skulk in among the cabins; still carrying the dog under his arm, lest the animal might take a fancy to go scenting among the pots of some other darky's kitchen, and so betray his presence in the "quarter."

Fortunately for the coon-hunter, the little "shanty" that claimed him as its tenant stood at the outward extremity of the row of cabins—nearest the path leading to the plantation woodland. He was therefore enabled to re-enter without much chance of attracting observation.

As it so chanced, he was not observed; but got back into the bosom of his family, without any one being the wiser.

Blue Bill's domestic circle consisted of his wife, Phoebe, and several half-naked pickaninnies. Once more among them, however, he found he was still not safe, but had yet a gauntlet to run. His reappearance so soon, unexpected; his empty game-bag; the coon-dog tucked under his arm; all had their effect upon Phoebe. She could not help feeling astonishment, nor did she bear it in silence.

"Bress de Lor, Bill! Wha for you so soon home? Neider coon nor possum! An' de dog toated after dat fashun! You ain't been a gone more 'n a hour! Who'd speck see you come back dat-a-way, emp-hand-ed; nuffin, cep you own ole dog! 'Splain it, Bill!"

The coon-hunter dropped his canine companion to the floor, and sat down upon a stool, but without giving the demanded explanation. He only said:

"Nebba mind, Phoebe, gal; nebba you mind why I home so soon. Dat's nuffin 'trange. I seed de night warn't a-gwine to be fav'able fo' trackin' de coon; so dis niger konkloid ter leab ole cooney alone!"

"Looke hya, Bill!" said his wife, laying her hand upon his shoulder, and gazing earnestly into his eyes. "Dat ere ain't de correck explicashun. Yer ain't tellin' me de troof!"

The coon-hunter quailed under the searching glance, but still said nothing. He was at a loss what answer to make.

"Da's somethin' mysterious 'bout dis," continued his better half. "You've got a secret, nigga; I kin tell it by de glint ob yer eye. I nebba see dat look on ye, but I know you ain't yaseff; jess as ye use desceve me when you war in such a way 'bout brown Bet."

"Wha you talkin' 'bout, Phoebe? Dar's no brown Bet in the case. I swar dar ain't!"

"Who sayed dar war? No, Bill, dat's all past. I only spoke ob her 'cause ya look jess now like ye did when Bet used bam boozle ye. What I say now am dat you ain't yaseff. Dar's a cat in de bag, somewha; you better let her out, an' tell me de whole 'tory."

As Phoebe made this appeal, her glance rested searching upon her husband's face, and keenly scrutinized the play of his features.

There was not much play to be observed. The coon-hunter was a pure-blooded African, with features immobile as those of the Sphinx. And from his color nothing could be deduced. As already said, it was the purity of its ebon blackness, producing a sort of purple iridescence over the epidermis, that had given him his sobriquet of "Blue Bill."

Unfinchingly he stood the inquisitorial glance; and for the time Phoebe was foiled. Only until after supper, when the frugality of the meal—made so by the barren chase—had perhaps something to do in melting the heart and relaxing the tongue of the coon-hunter. Whether this, or what ever was the cause, certain that before going to bed, he unb burdened himself to his beloved Phoebe, by making full confession to her of what he had witnessed on the swamp edge.

He told also of the letter he had picked up; which he now cautiously pulled out of his pocket, and handed it to his better half.

Phoebe had once been a family servant—an indoor domestic, and handmaiden to her white mistress. This was in the days of youth—the halcyon days of girlhood, in "Ole Varginay"—before she had been transported west, sold to Ephraim Darke, and by him degraded to the lot of an ordinary outdoor slave. But her original owner had taught her to "read," and her memory still retained a trace of this early education

sufficient for her to decipher the script her husband had put into her hands.

She first looked at the photograph; as it came first out of the envelope. There could be no mistaking whose portrait it was. Helen Armstrong was too conspicuously beautiful to have escaped the notice of the humblest slave in the settlement. Too good also; for, as a friend to the negroes, she was known to them throughout the whole line of river plantations.

Blue Bill's spouse spent some minutes gazing upon the fair face, as she did so, remarking:

"How bewful am dat young lady! What pity she gone 'way from de place!"

Then, spreading out the sheet of paper, and holding it close to the flare of the tall-dip, she read:

"DEAR CHARLES—When we last met under the magnolia you asked me a question. I told you I would answer it in writing. I now keep my promise, and you will find the answer underneath my own very imperfect image, which I herewith send inclosed. Papa has finally fixed the day of our departure from the old home. On Tuesday next we are to set out in search of a new one. Will it ever be as dear as that we leave behind? The answer will depend upon—need I say who? After reading what I have written upon the picture, surely you can guess. Then, I have confessed all—all woman can, could, or would. In six little words I have made over to you my heart. Accept them as its surrender!"

"And now, Charles, to speak of things more prosaic, as in this hard world we are constrained to do. On Tuesday morning—at a very early hour, I believe—a boat will leave Natchez, bound up the Red River. Upon it we travel as far as Natchitoches. There we are to remain for some time, while papa makes preparations for our further transport into Texas. As yet he is not certain what part of the 'Lone Star' State he will select for our future home. He speaks of a place upon the head-waters of the Colorado river, said to be a beautiful country which you, having been out there, will know all about. In any case, we are to remain some time—at least six weeks—in Natchitoches; and

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crushed and broken as he has broken my poor heart!"

The sigh that escaped her, as she surrendered the bit of cardboard, was more like a scream—a cry of anguish. It had the accent that could only come from what she had spoken of—a broken heart.

As she turned away to re-enter the cabin of the steamboat, she seemed ill-prepared for taking part, or pleasure, in a hand of cards.

And she took not either. That game of vingt-un she never played.

Still half-distracted with the agony through which her soul had passed—the traces of which she knew must be visible on her face—before appearing in the brilliantly-lighted saloon, she passed round the corner of the ladies' cabin, intending to enter her own state-room by the outside door.

It was but to spend a moment before her looking-glass, to arrange her toilet, her dress, the coiffure of her hair—perhaps the expression of her face—all things that to a man may appear trivial, but to a woman important—even in the hour of sadness and despair. No blame to woman for acting thus. It is but an instinct—the primary care of her life—the secret spring of her influence and power.

In preparing to her toilette, Helen Armstrong was but following the example of her sex.

She did not follow it far—not so far as to get before the looking glass, or even inside the room. Before entering it, she made stop by the door, and stood with face set toward the river's bank. The boat had sheered close in shore; so that the tall forest trees shadowed her track—the tips of their branches almost sweeping the hurricane-deck.

They were cypresses, festooned with Spanish moss, that hung down like the drapery of a death-bed. One was blighted, stretching forth bare limbs, blanched white by the weather, desiccated and jointed like the arms of a skeleton.

A ghostly sight, causing her a slight shivering, as under the clear moonbeams the steamer swept past the place.

It was a relief to her when the boat got back again into darkness.

Only momentary; for then, under the shadow of the cypresses, amidst the fitful coruscation of the fireflies, she saw a face—the face of Charles Clancy! It was high up among the trees, on a level with the hurricane-deck!

It could only have been fancy? Clancy could not be there, either in the trees, or on the earth? The thing could only be a deception of her senses—a delusive vision, such as occurs to clairvoyants, at times deceiving themselves.

Hallucination or not, Helen Armstrong had no time to reflect upon it. Before the face of her false lover faded from view, a pair of arms—black, sinewy, and stiff—were stretched toward, roughly grasped her around the waist, and lifted her aloft into the air!

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

A Man's Obsinacy.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"IRENE, you are beautiful as a Hour!" Frank Delmar's eyes looked the admiration his lips so impulsively expressed, and pretty Irene Mountjoy blushed as her lover lifted a tress of her long, loose hair and kissed it ardently.

"I am glad if I am dressed to suit you, Frank; mamma said she heard you say you thought I would look well in light green."

She gave a little stolen glance into the mirror as she spoke, and thought away down in her heart that she did look well.

A petite, exquisitely molded figure, complexion of clear pink and white, heavy brown eyelashes and brows that matched the luxuriant hair, a wee scarlet-lipped mouth, where the small teeth occasionally gleamed, and a proudly-curved throat, were the charms she saw reflected in the glass, and that were heightened by the becoming green tarletan dress—a perfect tumble of ruffles and puffs. A set of exquisite dead-gold jewelry—Frank's gift on their betrothal day—collar and wristlets of creamy yellow lace, and white kids.

Frank Delmar loved her dearly—this winking, winsome little woman, whose white-lidded eyes were so appealingly raised to his handsome, intelligent face.

"I know you are going to crave something of me, Irene," she said, stooping lower than was absolutely necessary; but, then, her breath was always so pure and cool, and the touch of her delicate cheek was so nice! "I see it in your eyes, Irene; only before I say yes, you must coax me ever so much. I do love to be coaxed."

Frank threw himself back again in the angle of the sofa, his feet crossed, his hands clasped over his curly black hair—all ready to be "coaxed" by those sweet lips that could pout or plead, as the caprice willed.

Irene laughed, and, disregarding the elaborate trimming on her dress, knelt down beside her selfish liege.

"I do so want you to let me have one round dance to-night, Frank. It's so long since I've danced a polka, or redowa, or galop, Frank."

One would unhesitatingly have decided that the destiny of nations was at stake had they seen the earnest imploration in Irene's eyes, or the sudden blackening over of Frank Delmar's face.

"There!" added she, half disappointedly, half wexedly, "I just knew how you would do when I mentioned it. I do think you are unreasonable, Frank Delmar!"

And the lips pouted out in their scarlet beauty, till Frank could not help springing up and kissing them.

"Unreasonable am I, Irene, because it makes the cold chills run over me to see some other fellow's arm around your waist, and your dear face so close to his shoulder? Well, Irene, perhaps I am unreasonable, but I can't help it!"

He smiled in her eyes, and she thought how handsome he was when he allowed that transient gleam of nice white teeth to show under the fierce black mustache; and with the same thought was the one that he was jealously exacting.

"But other girls—every other girl, Frank, dances the round dances. I'm just sick of the Lancers, and poky old quadrilles! I do believe I hate the German."

She could have been no more vehement had she been upholding the noblest cause that ever required to have voices raised in its behalf.

"And all because the only favor I ever have asked is that you reserve all your round dances for me, who, of all the men

in the wide world, has the *only* right to ask and receive the boon!"

He spoke a little sternly, and of all things, that most touched little Irene Mountjoy. So she drooped her fringed lids lower over her violet eyes, and glanced half timidly at him.

"But I would *so* like a polka, or—a waltz, with—with—Mr. De Maury!"

She had just pronounced the name, almost under her breath, when Frank jumped up from the sofa, a fiery wrath shining in his eyes, and the suggestion of terrible indignation in his voice.

"Rene! you would not dance with Tom De Maury—a rejected suitor!"

"Why not? isn't he as good as Lily Bellville?"

She looked him full in the face now, and her eyes grew blacker and blacker.

"He may be as good, but I never was engaged to Miss Bellville."

"Yet you dance round dances with her, while I must not with any one!"

She spoke triumphantly, as if her argument was unanswerable. But Frank evidently did not "see it" in the same light.

"Very true, Rene, I dance with Miss Bellville and other ladies, because you never offered any objection. If you disapprove, say so, and I'll never transgress again. Don't be angry with me, Rene."

He spoke with a tender, deprecating way, that went straight to her heart, but she was just a little too provoked to act upon it.

"I'm not angry, Frank, not would I for a moment think of depriving you of your liberty!"

But her voice was cold and constrained, and as Frank just then heard the carriage-wheels roll up to the curbstone, he decided to let the master drop for the present.

"Come, dear, shall we go?"

She took his arm to the carriage, little dreaming of the fatal influences that were that night to control her.

Mrs. Kestrello's dressing-rooms were almost deserted when Irene Mountjoy went in to divest herself of wraps and furs, and take a last good look in the cheval glass.

Piles of outer robes lay on the lounges, and hung on the nails; and just as Irene hung her waterproof behind the door that led into the toilette chamber, the sudden mention of her own name made her pause in wonderment, and listen.

"It's unaccountable, positively, where he sees any attraction in Miss Mountjoy. I think she's too little for style, don't you, NINA?"

"Oh, some gentlemen prefer *la petite*, you know. However, I am glad I am not a giantess myself, or I should despair of winning the least regard from the only gentleman who will be here to-night that I care for."

"And that is Mr. De Maury, I know. Oh, Belle."

Irene heard low laughter; then, after a second, another remark that sent the blood rushing to her heart.

"I've promised the third waltz to Frank Delmar, Nina. He's such a splendid dancer. They say he forbids his fair fiancee indulging in."

And Irene lost the remainder of the sentence in the rustling of silk trails as the ladies descended the stairs.

Belle Hawkins and Miss Forth—the concocted things! *I'll* teach them a lesson for their cool impudence," thought Irene, and she went to the foot of the stairs to meet Frank with a deeper flush than usual on her cheeks, and a hard, cold glint in her eyes.

That "third waltz" was not forgotten by her, but there was not even a shadow of reproach in her eyes when Frank Delmar and Belle Hawkins passed her in the Strauss waltz, as she sat leisurely in a dim corner, Tom De Maury leaning over her chair, fanning her. She saw them, though, plainly enough; her lover, who obstinately refused to grant his permission for her to do what he was doing with his arm around Miss Hawkins' braw-sashed waist, and his hand holding hers; and Belle Hawkins, herself, the girl who everybody knew was "dying" for Tom De Maury.

As the two floated gracefully by, Irene remembered the cold criticism she had heard on herself, but there was not even a shadow of reproach in her eyes when Frank Delmar and Belle Hawkins passed her in the Strauss waltz, as she sat leisurely in a dim corner, Tom De Maury leaning over her chair, fanning her. She saw them, though, plainly enough; her lover, who obstinately refused to grant his permission for her to do what he was doing with his arm around Miss Hawkins' braw-sashed waist, and his hand holding hers; and Belle Hawkins, herself, the girl who everybody knew was "dying" for Tom De Maury.

Then, with all her pretty piquancy of manner, she whispered to Tom:

"I've a notion to try that, Tom. Will you?"

His eyes shone brightly—he loved her yet so, and she would have been his had not Frank Delmar stepped between them.

"Oh, if you will, Rene! I will be so happy and honored. I would have asked you often only—only—"

"You thought Frank wouldn't let me? Well, I see he is quite devoted to Miss Hawkins. Come, Tom."

And just as Frank Delmar bowed his partner to her chair, he almost started in astonishment to see Irene and De Maury slowly circle past him.

He was too thoroughly a gentleman to betray the slightest anger, but a volcano was ready to burst within him when he saw with what unconscious tenderness Tom De Maury supported her fair girlish figure, and how ravishingly content her face looked just over the shoulder of the man who once had been all in all to her!

At first Frank was only jealously indignant; an hour later, when the ice once broken, Irene had danced several polkas and valses with various gentlemen, he was deeply wounded and mortified; but when he went to her, just previous to the last Lancers that she had reserved for him days before, and found she had forgotten all about it, and promised to Mr. De Maury, he was enraged.

"As you please, Irene. But remember you owe me an explanation, at least."

"You don't mean—you can't mean—"

"I mean what I say. Oh! Tom, I'm ready."

Frank's eyes flashed as she took De Maury's arm. Irene had called him Tom, too!

"She shall apologize, or—or—"

He didn't like the sharp pain that alternative caused him; or the blank agony in his heart when, twenty minutes later, he discovered that Irene and Tom De Maury had driven home together.

Three weeks later, and Frank had not seen Irene since. To-night he was walking

the floor of his room, a pale gloom on his face.

"Shall I, or sha'n't I?"

He had asked himself that same question hundreds of times in those days of misery, and he was no nearer answering it than the morning after Miss Kestrello's party.

Irene had wronged him, willfully, and deliberately. She had not offered the slightest explanation of her unaccountable conduct, and he—the wronged, the innocent—should he go and crave pardon for what she had done?

Of course that was not to be thought of; he was a *man*, and it was beneath him to tenderly, kindly show impulsive little Irene her fault, and take her to his breast and kiss her had done?

Had he only known all the heart-aches, all the tears, all the little penitential notes Irene had written and burnt! but he didn't; and, by degrees, Irene began to think Frank couldn't love her much, or he'd come to the house and give her a chance to fix it.

Then Tom De Maury, who had cut his wisdom-teeth, and heard of hearts being caught in the rebound, made his way while the sun shone.

And the next thing Frank Delmar knew—*Irene's* wedding-cards were sent to him!

So he lost her, all through his obstinacy, and I am glad of it, for Irene was happy, and Tom a model husband, who was not stubborn as a mule.

Laura's Peril: OR, THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

SUFFERING.

ELTON ROBART was highly pleased with the impression his daughter had made on Doctor Foster, and the remainder of his guests as well; he had heard her praised and flattered on all sides for the purity of her complexion, for the golden tints in her hair, for the suavity of her manner, her taste in dressing, and the sweetness of her voice.

He was very fond of his *pét*, and it gave him exquisite delight to hear her well spoken of.

"Laura, darling," he said, when they were alone at last, "you have carried away the honors of the evening again, as you always do."

"I've promised the third waltz to Frank Delmar, Nina. He's such a splendid dancer. They say he forbids his fair fiancee indulging in."

"And Irene lost the remainder of the sentence in the rustling of silk trails as the ladies descended the stairs.

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"As you please, Irene. But remember you owe me an explanation, at least."

"Which you'll never get," she retorted hotly.

"You don't mean—you can't mean—"

"I mean what I say. Oh! Tom, I'm ready."

Frank's eyes flashed as she took De Maury's arm. Irene had called him Tom, too!

His eyes were glazing, and his breath was coming in quick, short gasps; still, that voice reached his senses, and, instinctively, he put his wasted hand in hers. "God bless you, Laura, my pet, my darling! You have been my guardian angel!"

Her tears fell faster than ever, and her sobs shook her whole frame.

"Put your face down, close, close to mine. There!" with an effort he pressed his lips to the round cheek.

"It's growing dark—let in the light—let in the light!"

On tip-toe Dr. Foster approached the window and drew back the curtains. The light flashed in, in a great flood of radiance, but the invalid saw it not; he was passing through the dark waters that girdle the earth—going from time to eternity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A NEW LOVE.

JOHN NEVIN slowly recovered. He had been very close to the boundaries of another world; in fact, for a time, his life was despaired of, but, thanks to the tender nursing he received from Alice, a sound constitution, and the old physician's skill, he improved until everybody could see that the danger was past; and there only remained a little careful attention on his own part to make him what he once was.

In those quiet autumn days which covered the period of his convalescence, he had time to think calmly of his infatuation for Laura Robarts, and it was then a new light broke in upon him. Scanning closely every word, every action of that beautiful woman, he could not find the slightest evidence of her ever having entertained any thing but a passing regard for him.

'Tis true she was always smiling when she met him, and apparently happy in his society; but, it was more than possible that she was the same gay, happy beauty in his absence; and now, he felt that he had permitted his passion for the first time in his life to obscure his judgment. Besides—and this, perhaps, had made him look so philosophically on the past—he had learned to love Alice Houston with a more tender, if less passionate, love than that which Laura had inspired.

Laura was beautiful, dazzling, fascinating, and his love for her was partly admiration; but Alice was loving, gentle, self-sacrificing, and in those days of burning fever he watched eagerly for her coming, as if her presence had the power to free him from the pain that was almost driving him wild; while the flutter of her dress, and the presence of her hand, pleased him more than any thing ever had before.

As he grew better, however, Alice became shy and retiring—more like her old self, and never went to the sick chamber unless on an errand, and on such occasions remained no longer than was necessary for the completion of her task.

John noticed this. It was very tantalizing to him to have her come in, speak a word or two, and steal out again, as if she was afraid of, or did not care for him; but, it made him look for her coming more eagerly, and, I think, added not a little to his love for her.

But John kept his peace until he was able to leave his room; then he determined to settle the matter forever.

Strange as it may appear, and confident as he was of victory, he hesitated to propound the all important query. For the first time he began to realize that he was a different man; that he lacked a certain quality of manhood; that it was an awkward matter to get about, and, finally, he began to construe Alice's shyness as coyness, and he not unfrequently found himself wondering if she had not learned to despise him for his hesitancy, while he was learning to adore her for her modesty.

He could have sat down and written to her the whole story—every word that was in his heart—with perfect composure, but, there was no excuse for that; it would look like cowardice, as if he was afraid to speak, and she might think meanly of him on that account.

About this time, George Dalby came to Oak Manor, and Mabel and he were everlastingly intruding themselves upon John and Alice, at the very moment the former was thinking about words to express his thoughts.

The whole affair was very aggravating to a sensitive man who had long passed the period of brass and boyhood, and he was growing desperate when, one evening—a beautiful October evening—he found himself alone with Alice in the drawing-room.

The sky was still bright with the pale light of day, but the shadows were dense in the apartment where the lovers sat.

"It's getting quite dark," said Alice, interrupting one of John's stories of the old world. "Excuse me, but we had better have some light, had we not?"

He caught her dress as she was rising. "No, please; there is plenty of light. I prefer the dimness."

"Indeed."

"Yes; my eyes are not quite as strong as they used to be; the fever, it appears to me, has burned a great deal of their strength out."

"Oh, very well. I thought you preferred the light."

"So I do," he replied; "but not at all times, and not every kind of light. There is a garish blaze that dazes the sight; it is very brilliant, but it is bad in its effect; it ruins the eye it delights."

She did not speak, and he continued:

"It is like a certain kind of beauty that intoxicates—makes one, as it were, drunk with passion, and we recover from its effects only to loathe it."

She knew why he spoke so earnestly, and this knowledge made her say: "And like liquor again, the inebriate often returns to the delicious poison. Disgust may only last while opportunity to indulge is lacking."

"But this shall not be so in my case," he said, abruptly. "I have tasted of the mad-dancing bowl, but from henceforth, if you consent, dearest, I'll bask in a purer light."

She put up her hand deprecatingly.

"How do I know that this is not intoxication in a milder form? No, John, I will not permit you to fall into new meshes; you have suffered enough already."

"Then you do not love me—you do not respect—"

She interrupted him: "Yes, I do. I love and respect you; have done so for many a day; but, after all that has happened, I think it only right—and this, remember, is for your security as well as mine—that we do nothing rashly."

"Nothing rashly?"

He was astonished at the girl's wisdom.

"What I mean by doing nothing rashly is this: you have traveled a great deal—have

seen many faces—have been charmed by one; whatever came between you, I know not; but this I do know, that you can't here without any affection for me; your heart was wholly hers. You have been very ill; you are yet little better than an invalid; you doubtless feel grateful to me for my attention to you during your illness; this has moved you to speak."

She paused for a reply, and John answered:

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She was about her; her head nestled upon his breast, then mngle with society, forgot that we are any thing to each other, and if, at the end of six months, you find that you really love me—that this is not the dream of an invalid—then—"

He rejoined the crowd at the dilapidated bar, and tried to make himself agreeable until his gold chronometer proclaimed the hour of ten, when, bidding them good-night, he took the candle and ascended to his room. Upon entering he discovered that some person had paid it a visit during his brief absence, for his ornamented seat, instead of remaining beneath the couch, now lay across it.

"This is a familiarity which looks suspicious," murmured Lee, placing the candle upon the only chair—a backless one, at that—the room contained. "If my nocturnal visitor had stolen the bat, he would have left me entirely defenseless, for I am otherwise unarmed."

He was about to place the stick at the head of his couch, preparatory to retiring, when his eye caught sight of words traced in pencil upon the newly-painted surface.

"What does this mean?" he inwardly ejaculated, and walking to the light he read the following, written in delicate chirography:

"Do not sleep to-night; your life is in danger!"

No signature was appended to the warning. It needed none to tell the menaced champion who was his guardian angel.

He did not disrobe. Grasping his bat and extinguishing the light, he stationed himself behind the door, resolving to watch and wait till the coming day.

By degrees the canvas below hushed, and at last all was silent. Hour after hour waned, leaving Lee Worne behind the door.

Midnight passed with no startling developments.

About one o'clock there was a footstep on the stairs, at the head of which stood the door of the champion's chamber.

The step approached; another followed, and presently whispered just beyond the threshold fell upon the listener's ears.

"He sleeps like the hills," said the lowest of voices. "You lead the way, Gus. Don't be afraid of the door; Blow off the hinges while the chap was eatin' supper!"

A moment later the door swung back slowly, noiselessly, and the head of a herculean Texan protruded into the silent apartment. The dim light of the stars, struggling through the cobwebbed panes, revealed that hideous face to Lee Worne, who, without a moment's hesitation, raised his bat, and brought it down upon the villain's skull with all his strength!

Then, before the three other would-be-murderers could recover their equilibrium, he sprang over the prostrate man, and dealt them scientific base-ball blows which sent them headlong down the steps.

The landlord hurried to the scene of conflict. The old rascal had been waiting in the bar for the quartette's return, and, fearing deserved justice, said:

"Saved 'em right."

The trio making the rapid descent were badly punished; but the fourth scamp lay motionless with a crushed skull, which soon terminated his existence.

The young girl—Lee's preserver—suddenly appeared upon the ghastly scene, and beckoned him from the spot.

"When they recover from their defeat," she whispered, "they will kill you. Come with me."

He followed her to the gloomy stable, and two steeds, already equipped, presented themselves.

"Lecompton is but eight miles distant," she said. "Mount! I will guide you thither."

Without persuasion the young man readily submitted to be extremely sultry, and the young man, after anathematizing a country that could not afford a railroad or a decent traveling conveyance of any kind, settled himself back upon the wide seat, with his bat at his side and valise at his feet.

"I don't know for certain if we'll git to Compton to-night," said the dust-begrimed Jehu, looking in at the champion enjoying a rickety stage, passing one night in Lecompton, a country seat of some note and size.

One morning in September, 1870, just as the sun was peeping over the eastern hills, an old stage-coach, whose only passenger was Lee Worne, left a little Texan town on the old Galveston road.

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The day proved to be extremely sultry, and the young man, after anathematizing a country that could not afford a railroad or a decent traveling conveyance of any kind, settled himself back upon the wide seat, with his bat at his side and valise at his feet.

MY FIRST DECLAMATION

BY JOE JOY, JR.

The piece was a fine one to speak. My mother had made the selection, I had studied over it, and I will now say every word and inflection; I said it along with my prayers, And I made it my grace at the table. I spoke it on all of the chairs, And in another place made it most able. It told me I was destined to be a Lito Scisso-oh, who was a Roman, Like Demosthenes also, said he, An orator second to no man. He patted my head with much joy, And said "It is certainly plain, sir, That you will be a great man." Stand up there and speak it again, sir." So I walked round that house quite as proud As a Roman would walk in the Forum, Whose wit had enraptured the crowd, And whose conduct of me was for 'em. All pennies were given, and candy bought and eaten, and then came the Friday, I knew that I had my speech handy. And I went to school dressed rather tidy. The family came, too; the front rows Of seats were filled with visitors lined, I seated in easy room. For my turn to come, quiet in mind; At last "Master Joy" rather got me; I rose and went up the aisle, I felt if I could not stand still, And I vainly attempted to smile. I stepped on the platform and bowed To the blackboard, said "Oh!" and turned round. This was a smile in the crowd. And I was sure eyes fall to the ground. Then I looked at my boots, which were new, Then longingly up to the ceiling, And every thing looked mighty blue. And I felt that my senses were reeling. I turned my head, and then at the throat, I rubbed and scratched my hand back in my ear. The speech it was further than Christmas. And I shrung'd up my shoulders quite queer. Then I thought that I had it, and said— "I lay my hand upon my soul! I dropped out of the room my soul!" And smiled with the ghastliest grins. I glanced at my father, who frowned; I glanced at my mother, who sighed; In misery I wiggled around, Then I knocked my peepers and cried. All sev'd as silk as a knife. And when I got home, oh, my father he gave me the confoundedest worst licking—that ever I had in my life.

The King's Jealousy:
OR,
The Duke's Disgrace.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

THE victory had been gained, the Italian Confederates had been defeated at Marignano, and the Chevalier Bayard had been honored by the request that his king should receive knighthood at the hands of the knight "without fear and without reproach."

Francis was much elated with his victory, had ordered a great feast and tournament in honor of it.

He sat in his royal chair in the great pavilion, awaiting the arrival of the young queen, with her ladies, to preside over the tournament, and, to tell the truth, somewhat impatiently.

Beside the throne, in an attitude of obsequious respect, stood the Chevalier Claude de Vaudrey. He had just said something to the king, which apparently troubled the latter, for his face clouded, and he sharply remarked:

"Messire de Vaudrey, you forget that the French king is not a shopkeeper of the Faubourg St. Antoine; but a knight, made by the hand of the first knight on earth. 'Tis a knight's duty to wait his lady's pleasure, however long she keep him; not to count the minutes, as if she were an errand boy, loitering on a message."

De Vaudrey bowed low, and answered, in a subdued tone:

"Far be it from me to criticise her majesty, sire. My remark was not about the queen. Her majesty is only too good and kind to all at court, for any to speak about her. But the Constable, as your majesty knows, is apt to bore ladies, and keep them chattering. And your majesty sent him, full half an hour ago, to announce to the queen that the sports awaited her presence."

De Vaudrey was the king's close favorite, or he would never have dared to say as much. The king was hot-headed and kind-hearted, but very jealous. He caught at the hint.

"Tell me what thou meanst, Claude," he said, in a low voice, shifting uneasily in the chair. "I know thou lovest me, or thou wouldst not dare to speak against Bourbon."

"Against the Constable de Bourbon!" said De Vaudrey, in affected surprise.

"What could a simple gentleman like me say against the first noble in France? I can say nothing. I know how long my life would be safe in the dark, if it came to his ears, that I had spoken against him. Your majesty knows that well. But this I will say in your majesty's ear; watch him when he enters, and pardon poor Claude de Vaudrey for the over-anxious love that prompts his speech. Hark! they come."

Even as he spoke, the trumpets without sounded a grand flourish, and the curtains of the pavilion were caught up as if by magic.

The Chevalier Bayard and a crowd of nobles took their places round the tent, and a chamberlain announced, in a loud voice:

"HER MAJESTY, THE QUEEN!"

Francis half rose from his chair, with the instinct of chivalry, to receive the queen, and then, as suddenly, sat down again, with his head turned sharply toward the entrance, and an eager, suspicious frown upon his face. Claude de Vaudrey drew back a step and looked in the same direction, with bowed head, a watchful look on his crafty countenance.

The next moment the tall form of the Constable de Bourbon, in his uniform as captain of the king's musketeers, appeared at the entrance, and on his arm was the young queen. Pages and ladies followed behind.

The haughty head of the handsome Constable was turned toward his beautiful partner, a smile on his face, as if he had just finished speaking.

The queen cast a quick glance at the ground and blushed and looked down, as she passed the side of the throne. It was not the first time she had met that jealous look.

Bourbon had not seen it. He came to the front of the throne, and calmly addressed the king:

"I have obeyed your majesty's orders," he said. "I have the honor to resign her majesty, the queen, into your royal hands."

The queen raised her eyes, and met the cold glance of the king.

"I must crave your majesty's pardon," she said, smiling, "for keeping you waiting; but, you know 'tis a woman's privilege to loiter, and a knight's to forgive her any thing she asks."

She had recovered herself in the little pause, and looked as if she expected the king to rise. To her surprise, he remained seated and covered.

"You have loitered long, madam," he said sharply. "The next time we will send some cavalier less likely to detain you. 'Tis not the first time we have had to remind the Constable de Bourbon that the king of France does not wait, even for the queen."

Bourbon flushed deeply. For a few minutes there was a silence as of the grave in the pavilion. The courtiers perceived something was wrong. The Constable had been the greatest General of his time, and had been the principal agent in the previous day's victory. His careless gaiety and tendency to gallantry had made him an universal favorite in the court, with none more than the young queen. Only the insidious hints of De Vaudrey, however, could have made any harm of his courtesy to the royal lady.

The king sat looking at him as if he expected him to reply; and the Constable, in blood relation as he was to royalty, did reply.

"Your majesty did not find that fault with me yesterday," he said, respectfully, but firmly. "Your majesty shall never have cause to do it again, on the honor of Charles of Bourbon."

"We hope not," said the king, somewhat mollified by the allusion to yesterday's battle. "We hope not, cousin of Bourbon. Let the sports begin. Madam, please you to take your place. The Constable of France will escort the queen to her seat."

"And is not your majesty coming with me?" asked the queen. She did not like the tone of his last words, nor the sarcastic smile that accompanied them.

"We prefer to tilt as a simple knight today," said Francis, coldly. "Bourbon knows his duty, and seems to love it well. The king will not come to the lists to-day. Francis of Orleans may, and let Charles of Bourbon look to his tilting."

Bourbon bowed haughtily.

"I will tilt my best, your majesty," he said, quietly. Then he offered his arm to the queen, with the same princely grace as before, and the two swept from the pavilion to the lists.

Francis looked angrily after them, and De Vaudrey bent his head and slipped the insidious whisper into the king's ear:

"Your majesty sees. I was right."

Francis made no answer till the tent was

stirrup now, for Charles of Bourbon is on his horse before thee."

De Vaudrey silently nodded and retired to the end of the lists. Bourbon closed his visor, and both champions poised their lances. The next moment, with the speed of two flying arrows, they shot forth from either end of the lists, and met together in the center with the shock of a thunderbolt.

Both lances flew to shivers at the same moment, and De Vaudrey reeled in his saddle, while Bourbon sat erect as a tower. Then both caught up their battle-axes, and flew at each other like two angry tigers. In a moment more the strength and skill of Bourbon brought the battle to an end. He was unequalled with the battle-ax. His third blow lighted on De Vaudrey's visor, and the force of the shock smashed it in, and broke the laces of the helmet, which rolled to the ground, disclosing the features of the king himself covered with blood. Bourbon dropped his battle-ax in dismay. "The king!" he faltered.

"Ay!" said Francis, in a low tone of fury. "And he shall pay thee for that blow, Charles of Bourbon!"

How he did, a sequel will show.

Border Reminiscences.

Davy Crockett at the Alamo.

BY CAPT. BRUIN ADAMS.

It has been a disputed question as to how many of the Texans escaped the sword the day upon which the *Alamo* fell, some stating the number to be three, others two, while some declare that there was no living soul left to tell the story of that fearful massacre.

The second statement, however, is the true one, there being two persons spared, one of them the little child of a Texan officer, and the other its nurse, a negro woman.

From the lips of this single witness, for the child was far too young to know aught of what occurred, the world has learned all it will ever know, save through Mexican sources, and they can not be relied upon, of what transpired after the soldiers of Santa Anna had, by sheer weight of numbers, won their bloody way inside the walls.

Three separate times that day did the Mexican commander hurl his picked col-



THE KING'S JEALOUSY.

cleared. Then by a gesture he ordered the curtains let fall, and turned to De Vaudrey.

"By heavens, Claude!" he said, in a low, excited tone, "thou'ret right. The insolent bears himself as if he were my brother; and she smiles on him. Thou knowst more than thou hast said. Speak out. We will protect thee from him. Speak out!"

"If your majesty will wait till to-night," said De Vaudrey, boldly, "I will give you proofs that Bourbon has dared to lift his eyes where he should not. Your majesty will tilt to-day."

"Ay, by St. Denis!" said the king, sanguinely.

"Never yet found I man the like could break a lance with me. The knight of Marignano shall teach this proud Bourbon that 'King Francis does not hide his body behind his throne. Lend me thine armor. If I go to the lists in my own, he will say he knew me, and so gloss over his defeat. But I will overthrow him before I unhelm. He will fight at his best, when he would not fight me.'

Then began a scene that even the bloodiest massacre ever perpetrated by unrelenting savagery could not equal for devilish ferocity and tiger-like thirst for blood.

Early in the action the faithful nurse, with her little charge, sought safety in the upper room of a small stone building that stood in one angle of the wall, and from a narrow window watched the conflict that was raging in the square beneath.

As the Mexicans poured their masses over the shattered walls, the now almost defenseless garrison, clubbing their rifles or drawing their keen-edged Bowies, met the shock and instantly closed in a deadly hand-to-hand struggle.

"No quarter!" was the cry as the victors surged forward, but it was a useless threat; none was asked, none desired.

There was, said the old woman, not a single cry for mercy heard, unless, indeed, it came from Mexican lips, but with stern faces, and lips compressed in desperation, the Texans fought silently on and with terrific effect.

Soon the inclosure became strewn with dead and dying, and the watcher saw that where there lay one figure clad in buckskin or homespun there were twenty showing the gaudy uniform of the Mexican soldier.

Colonel Bowie had placed his back against the wall, and with the desperate weapon that he had himself invented, and which bore his name, he drew a charmed semicircle in front that none could cross, and which was only invaded by the far-reaching weapons of the Mexican lancers.

The stalwart McIntyre had with his clubbed rifle swept the field before him, as does the skillful crandler the ripened grain of the harvest field.

Colonel Travis, dragged from his bed, had grasped a dress sword, and though weakened by a mortal sickness, he paled the light weapon until, as he sank under many wounds, it was crimson to the very hilt.

And so throughout the brief but terrible combat that raged in the confined space, the nurse remained at her post and saw

unflagging his spirits, so deadly the long defense he had made, that even these half-civilized warriors from the mountains and valleys of Mexico, paused a moment ere they made their last assault, and gazed upon him in open admiration.

At that moment an officer of the staff dashed up, and ordered that the Texan be taken alive.

A grim smile flitted across the backwoodsman's bronzed face, and, with a slight shake of the head, he swung his weapon up, and the fight was renewed. Of particulars here the watcher could give none. All she saw was a confused mass of struggling, writhing, shouting men, above whose heads the heavy rifle-barrel rose and fell with the regularity and force of a trip-hammer.

More than once the yelling crowd broke and bore back, affording her a momentary glimpse of that blackened figure, now bloody from head to heel, still standing close within the angle of the wall, and still sweeping the space before him with the regularity and force of a trip-hammer.

Men had fallen at every stroke, and lying where they fell the ghastly pile grew to such proportions as to obstruct the movements of the attacking forces, while it afforded a slight advantage to him whose single arm had built it up.

But it was not possible for this to continue longer.

Even the iron sinewes of this truly wonderful man grew weary, and the strokes that had so long fallen with deadly effect, grew more and more feeble.

Then it was that the final rush was made.

For an instant there was profound silence while the compact mass surged and struggled; then a loud, clear yell, and once more the assailants parted right and left, exposing for the last time the hard-pressed man.

The rifle-barrel was no longer in his hand. In its stead he held the long, straight sword of a Mexican infantry officer, from whose grasp he had torn it, and who was as bewildered, just without the semicircle of prostrate forms.

Such was the tableau witnessed by the watcher from the window; and an instant only it remained; and then, with the same clear, ringing yell, the Texan leaped forward, and with the singular cry of, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead!" passed the treacherous blade, from point to hilt, through the officer's body, and with him, side by side, fell to the earth a corpse.

And so died Davy Crockett, the "Hero of the Alamo."

Short Stories from History.

Cool.—We all know of the Admiral Howe who gave us some trouble with his big ships, in our struggle for independence, but his personal traits are not so well appreciated as they should be. One of these traits this incident illustrates:

Admiral Lord Howe, when a captain, was once hastily awakened in the middle of the night by the lieutenant of the watch, who informed him, with great agitation, that the ship was on fire near the magazine. "If that be the case," said he, rising leisurely to put on his clothes, "we shall soon hear a further report of the matter." The lieutenant flew back to the scene of danger, and almost instantly returning, exclaimed: "You need not, sir, be afraid, the fire is extinguished." "Afraid!" exclaimed Howe, "what do you mean by sir? I never was afraid in my life," and looking the lieutenant full in the face, he added, "Pray, how does a man feel, sir, when he is afraid? I need not ask how he looks."

Wresting Victory from Defeat.—As a still further proof of this great naval officer's splendid courage, we have this most interesting reminiscence:

In Earl Howe's engagement with the French fleet, on the 1st of June, 1794, the Marlborough, by intrepidly breaking the enemy's line, became totally dismasted, and in that situation dropped with her stern on the bows of a French eighty-four, whose bowsprit came over the Marlborough's poop.

The Frenchmen were preparing to board, though with evident reluctance, when an English sailor of the name of Appleford, to be beforehand with them, mounted their bowsprit, and with his cutlass boldly leaped upon their forecastle, which he not only took possession of, but forced his adversaries to fly for safety into the waist of the ship; a French officer observing the uncommon behavior of the British tar, rushed from the quarter-deck, to reproach so many of his men for running away from one; and to convince them of his own honor, instantly commenced an attack upon Appleford, who, however, was fortunate enough to conquer him. His situation by this time becoming extremely dangerous, he thought it best to effect his retreat, as he was not at that time assisted on the spot by any of his countrymen; with this intention he again mounted the bowsprit, and by courageously springing from it, reached the poop-deck of his own ship at the moment when the vessels were drifting from each other.

During the confusion of the battle, the Marlborough was taken by several English ships for a Frenchman, more particularly so, as the whole of her colors had been shot away but one white ensign, which was then hoisted. This circumstance occasioned much destruction from the fire of those ships who fell into the mistake. At length the solitary ensign was also shot away; and by this circumstance the honor of England for a moment appeared to suffer. From the impossibility of replacing the colors, it seemed as if the ship had struck to the French, an idea which operated so strongly on the mind of Appleford, that he loudly exclaimed, "The English colors shall never be disdained where I am!" Then casting his eyes round the deck, he perceived the dead body of a marine, who had been shot through the head; he instantly stripped off his red coat, stuck it on a boarding pike, and exalted it in the air, swearing that the Englishmen would not desert their colors, and that when all the red coats were gone, they would hoist blue jacks. The singularity of such conduct infused fresh spirit into the hardy sons of Neptune, and they bravely fought till the glorious moment when the terrific struggle ended in victory.

The Great Suwaroff.—This celebrated Russian General won his fame by his remarkable deeds. His history reads like that of a medieval hero. As fierce as a Hun, and as devoted to his country as a crusader, he stands forth in Russian annals a figure of representative grandeur. This incident betrays the character of the man.

In the campaign of 1799, Suwaroff having passed St. Gotthard with the Russian army, found himself environed by difficulties of the most appalling description. His soldiers, worn out with cold and fatigue, found new enemies to contend with in every direction.

The Cossacks were compelled to dismount, as their horses became useless, or falling over precipices, were lost in the snow; and the horrors of their situation were powerfully increased by the absence of all intelligence of what was passing elsewhere.

Suwaroff then attempted to push forward into the valley of the Reuss, and arrived at what is called the Urnerloch, a